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Hopkins, Benjamin; Dawson, Chris

DOI:
10.1111/irj.12134

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Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Hopkins, B & Dawson, C 2016, 'Migrant workers and involuntary non-permanent jobs: agencies as new IR actors?', *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 163-180. https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12134

Migrant workers and involuntary non-permanent jobs: Agencies as new IR actors?

Total Word Count – 7630

Abstract (50 word limit) – *Using Quarterly Labour Force Survey data this paper illustrates the involuntary crowding of migrants from central and Eastern Europe into non-permanent work when moving to the United Kingdom. The role of agencies in mediating this relationship is examined, as is their new role as actors in industrial relations systems.*

1 Introduction

Research into non-permanent work has suggested that reasons stated for taking this type of employment can be categorised into two broad types; *voluntary* reasons such as a desire for job variety (Smith, 1998) or flexibility (Parker, 1994), and *involuntary* reasons, mainly the absence of a permanent alternative (Booth *et al*., 2002; Korpi and Levin, 2001). If routes into non-permanent work are largely associated with the former then non-permanent employment can be viewed positively, providing individuals not only with variety and flexibility but also potentially higher wages in higher skilled roles (O Riain, 2000). However, if these routes are involuntary then non-permanent employment may have negative implications not only for pay (Hamersma *et al*., 2014), but also for career progression (Forde and Slater, 2005) and well-being (Author B *et al*., 2014; Virtanen *et al*., 2005).

Non-permanent work in the United Kingdom now occurs in the context of a rapidly and dramatically altered labour market. On 1 May 2004 the A8 countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) acceded to the European Union, and over 1.1 million people from these nations registered on the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) to work in the UK before the scheme closed in April 2011. Prior to 2004, Clark and Drinkwater (2008) show that people from the A8 countries made up 4.1 percent of the total number of migrants and immigrants to the UK. From 2004-7 this figure rose to 36.5 percent. Despite these workers being more highly qualified on average than the native UK population (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006), these workers have experienced lower labour market prospects relative to comparable natives and many have taken non-permanent roles (Datta *et al*., 2007; Heery, 2004; McDowell *et al*., 2008). Although there is some circular migration (Author A *et al*., 2015), these issues are of particular concern to those making longer term stays in the UK who wish to find 'stepping stones' into roles in the UK. However, Chiswick and Miller (2008) suggest that recent

migrants will be confronted with lower labour market prospects as their skill sets are not directly transferrable to a higher income economy owing to a number of factors. These include language proficiency, labour market information, and portability of credentials, particularly foreign-gained qualifications. Owing to these challenges, many are involuntarily taking roles through employment agencies (Author A, 2009), identified by Heery and Frege (2006) as potential new actors in industrial relations worthy of investigation.

Using data drawn from the UK Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) covering the period 2006 to 2012 (i.e. during the operation of the WRS) this study shows that 11.5 percent of A8 migrants are in some form of non-permanent employment, as compared with 4.2 percent of UK nationals. More importantly, by analysing the variation in reasons for taking this non-permanent employment between A8 migrants and UK nationals this paper reveals both the *involuntary* nature of this crowding and the mediating role of agencies. Specifically, 65 percent of A8 migrants on non-permanent contracts are taking these roles through agencies as compared to 18.9 percent of UK natives, demonstrating the role of employment agencies as new actors in industrial relations (Heery and Frege, 2006) in the context of these labour market changes. Embedding these findings in data from previous qualitative case studies, it is argued that this *involuntary* crowding of A8 migrants is a consequence of the inability of these migrants to obtain a directly-employed job as their English language skills are not of a standard that allow them to pass an interview (e.g. Alberti, 2014; Author A, 2009).

2 Current literature on non-permanent work

A substantial amount of previous research (see, for example, Forde and Slater, 2005) has investigated reasons for organisations offering, and for individuals taking, non-permanent employment. Much of this research has been quantitative, some using QLFS data. The QLFS endeavours to explore

individuals' reasons for taking a non-permanent role with the following question, asked conditionally on an affirmative answer that an individual's job is non-permanent in some way:

Did you take that type of job rather than a permanent job because...

1. you had a contract which included a period of training?
2. you had a contract for a probationary period?
3. you could not find a permanent job?
4. you did not want a permanent job?
5. or was there some other reason?

(Source: QLFS questionnaire, 2008)

The econometric analysis presented in this paper utilizes the responses from this question. The first two responses concern information asymmetries – a role that involves a period of training can be considered as a *signalling* process by the individual, whereas an organisation may offer a job with a probationary period as a *screening* function. These reasons however only represent a small proportion of the non-permanent employees within our sample, making up approximately 10% of reported responses; consequently these motives do not form the main focus of this study. What is particularly important, and forms the basis for this paper, are the *voluntary* and *involuntary* reasons covered by responses 3 and 4, with these categories capturing the majority of individual responses within our sample. The literature related to these two key routes is reviewed below.

Voluntary non-permanent work

The distinction between voluntarily and involuntarily taking a non-permanent role is important as previous research has indicated that this will impact upon both pay and job satisfaction. For example,

Krausz *et al*. (1995) find that voluntary short term workers are more satisfied in their jobs than permanent workers. This satisfaction advantage is thought to stem from the opportunity to get higher wages or to cherry pick better jobs at the high skill end of the job spectrum (Cohen and Haberfeld, 1993; O Riain, 2000), the chance to try a number of different jobs (Smith, 1998), and to be detached from commitment and workplace politics (Casey and Alach, 2004; Parker, 1994). Workers may prefer the flexibility of working when they choose because of family commitments, studying commitments, or because they wish to pursue other activities such as travelling (Parker, 1994). Stanworth and Druker (2006), in a study conducted before the EU expansion, noted a diversity of reasons why organisations used temporary workers, but further found (Druker and Stanworth, 2004) that there could be a positive working relationship between employment agencies, end-user organisations, and the agency workers themselves. It is important to note, however, that it is more likely that workers who are choosing to voluntarily take a non-permanent role are those with higher levels of skills and qualifications. Further, these workers must have portable and recognised qualifications, and not have restrictive problems such as low levels of English language proficiency, so as to enable them to take jobs that fit their wider skill sets (Friedberg, 2000).

Involuntary non-permanent work

Alternatively, an individual may take a non-permanent role as they are unable to find a permanent role, which can be considered to be an *involuntary* move into non-permanent work. Krausz *et al*. (1995) show that these routes lead to lower levels of job satisfaction than permanent work. More widely, Virtanen *et al*. (2005) find that non-permanent work has effects on health, and Author B *et al*. (2014) find that non-permanent workers suffer a well-being disadvantage, resulting from feelings of job insecurity. Author A (2015) finds significant health and safety risks amongst agency workers owing to a lack of clarity of responsibility under the triangular employment relationship. Nollen (1996) finds that non-permanent workers earn lower wages, and Mitlacher (2007) notes that the wage

penalty is particularly pronounced for lower skilled workers. Forde and Slater (2005) note conflicting findings of studies on pay levels of non-permanent workers, arguing that the effect depends upon whether workers are voluntarily taking this type of work, and also whether the jobs are high or low skilled.

The role of agencies as actors

In the context of the EU expansion, this paper also aims to investigate the roles of employment agencies themselves as new actors in systems of industrial relations, particularly when considering involuntary routes into non-permanent work. Bellemare (2000) convincingly argues that Dunlop's (1958) industrial relations systems of managers, workers (and their representatives) and government should be expanded to identify and investigate new actors, proposing an analytical model of what constitutes an actor, and how these new actors can be investigated. Cooke and Wood (2014) note significant contextual changes in which these new actors are emerging. They identify these changes as heightened competition, the withdrawal of direct state intervention, and the increasing use of subcontracting, which has in turn led to the fragmentation of labour markets, new forms of work, and new classes of workers. This can then lead to a further undermining of working conditions – Cooke and Wood (2014) use the example of the different groups of native and migrant workers, with the willingness of the latter group to accept poorer work offers negatively impacting the former (see also McGovern, 2007; Piore, 1979). These actors are not necessarily new (Cooke and Wood, 2011), but may take on an increasingly important role in a new context (Michelson et al, 2008).

Following Bellemare (2000), Heery and Frege (2006) further expanded upon which actors beyond managers, workers and the state should be considered to be actors within the industrial relations system. These could include such diverse actors as social movement organisations or management

consultants. This call has led to some widening of the scope of actors analysed, including civil society organisations (Williams *et al*., 2011), citizen-consumers (Kessler and Bach, 2011) and faith-based organisations (Wills *et al*., 2009). Heery and Frege identify employment agencies as one example of Dunlop's 'specialised private agencies' that should be investigated, "particularly when they provide not just temporary labour but entire systems of management" (2006: 602). However, there has been little investigation into the roles that these agencies play as actors, particularly in the context of enabling migration.

Although Peck and Theodore (2002) and Ward (2002) have stated that agencies often try to present the image that they have been passive, reacting to demand rather than creating it, Ofstead (1999) and Forde (2008) have pointed to the influence of agencies in creating a market for non-permanent workers. Smith and Neuwirth's (2008) study of agencies in the US convincingly argues that these agencies create labour markets. In this way, agencies can be seen as active actors in the industrial relations system. The enlargement of the EU in 2004 has led to the specialisation of some agencies in the UK, who aim to exclusively supply A8 workers, as a result of the perception of A8 migrants as having a strong work ethic, linked to their labour market power (Tannock, 2013). There has also been increased managerial and public interest in the intersection of agency work and migration. For example, Greencore, the UK's largest sandwich maker, is planning on using agency workers from Hungary to work in its new plant in Northampton (Guardian, 2014), a town which has an unemployment rate of 6.8% (Financial Times, 2014). Despite this above average level of unemployment, the HR director of the firm, Allyson Russell, stated that "There aren't enough people around and it is not always the kind of work people have wanted to do. Ideally, we would be flooded with applications, but actually we are having to work really hard to find people who will come and work for us." (Recruiter, 2014). The use of this hiring method is perhaps unsurprising given that so many managers report that they prefer migrant workers to native workers (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009). Importantly, agencies may be active in promoting the use of these workers over those from the UK.

The aims, therefore, of this paper are firstly to investigate the differences in voluntary and involuntary motives to take non-permanent work between workers from the UK and migrants from the A8 nations. The latter group are found to be crowded into non-permanent work on an involuntary basis, being forced to take roles with agencies in order to overcome the dual problems of low levels of English language skills and lack of portability of qualifications. The role of employment agencies as new actors in the industrial relations system in enabling these transitions is then investigated, drawing upon data from previous qualitative studies to augment the econometric analysis conducted for this paper.

3 Data and descriptive statistics

The data used for the quantitative analysis presented in this paper is obtained from the UK QLFS, covering the years 2006-2012. Throughout this period all respondents who are employed in their reference week are asked to respond to the following question: "leaving aside your own personal intentions and circumstances, was your job…… 1) a permanent job, 2) or was there some way that it was not permanent?", thus identifying non-permanent work on this basis. Those reporting that their current job was non-permanent in some way were then asked about the reasons for this.[1] Individual observations are combined across the seven available years providing a total pooled sample of *218,276*, of which *9,317* (4.27 percent) are non-permanent in some way. The QLFS contains a longitudinal element, where each member of the sample is interviewed for 5 consecutive waves. Consequently, to avoid repeated observations when pooling data over several years, only January to March quarters of each year are selected, and wave 5 responses are excluded to avoid further

[1] The question regarding the reason for becoming a non-permanent worker is asked in every quarter from the beginning of 2006. A similar question was asked in the QLFS prior to 2006 – however the structure is not consistent with the post 2006 question and is therefore not suitable for analysis.

duplicate observations with wave 1 respondents from the previous year.[2] The data set is also limited to those individuals of working-age, excluding full-time students, and who are either UK nationals or A8 migrants and, for the latter, who arrived in the UK from 2004 onwards. In total we have 9,317 individual responses to this question; of this sample we have 8,954 responses from UK nationals and 363 responses from A8 migrants.

Insert Table 1 here

Table 1 summarises the distribution of responses to the question for the non-permanent A8 migrant and UK national sub groups, as well as other potential mediating influences on the likelihood of choosing a particular category that will be used in the subsequent multivariate analysis. From Table 1 clear differences in reasons can be seen from the raw data across the sub-groups. Firstly, from the bottom of Table 1, A8 migrants are substantially more likely to find themselves in non-permanent work than UK nationals; in particular, non-permanent work is reported by 11.5 percent of A8 migrants compared with 4.2 percent of UK nationals.

Furthermore it appears that this crowding of A8 migrants in non-permanent work is strongly influenced by involuntary causes, with 64.5 percent of the A8 sample citing the lack of availability of permanent jobs. For UK nationals, non-permanent work appears to be viewed more positively with a significantly lower proportion citing the involuntary category (37.4%), $\chi^2(1, N = 9{,}317) = 107.6$, $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, a significantly lower proportion of the A8 sample took non-permanent jobs voluntarily (5.8%) compared to UK natives (19.0%), $\chi^2(1, N = 9{,}317) = 40.3,\ p < 0.001$. Those

[2] Alternatively we could have combined data from all quarters and only selected individuals in their first wave. However, owing to the availability of data the approach was to take particular quarters from each year and to drop wave 5 responses. Using this methodology, four waves included from the selected quarter each year are used which in turn reduces the data manipulation effort involved. Both methods were tested, however, with the results indicating conformity for both methods.

reporting their current status as non-permanent were also asked about the nature of this non-permanent work. In particular, 65 percent of A8 migrants in non-permanent roles are taking these through agencies as compared to 18.9 percent of UK natives. The majority of UK natives in non-permanent roles hold fixed-term contracts (52.3%). Fixed-term contracts, usually negotiated on a directly-employed basis, tend to be associated with higher quality employment (see Author B *et al.* 2014) and are usually the norm in Britain, for example, among junior doctors in training within the National Health Service or post-doctoral research fellows in British universities. Only 19.6 percent of A8 migrants hold fixed-term employment, reflecting their lower labour market prospects in the UK job market.

It is useful at this point to also examine some of the demographic differences between non-permanent workers from the UK and those from the A8 nations. Looking at the sample means reported in Table 1, it is worth noting that our non-permanent sample of A8 migrant workers are considerably younger than their UK national counterparts, with the mean age of A8 migrants being 29.8 years and for UK nationals 38.2 years. A8 migrants are also much less likely to be married and to have dependent children. Importantly, A8 migrant workers have higher average years of education than UK nationals; A8 migrants have on average 1.2 years more education than their UK national counterparts.[3] A8 migrants also have much shorter average employment tenure as measured by months continuously employed. We also find that A8 non-permanent work is much more likely to be concentrated in industries associated with 'manufacturing, energy and water' (38.6%) and also 'distribution, hotels and transport' (31.7%). Comparably for UK nationals these industry sectors represent approximately 26 percent of the non-permanent market. As such, the discussion section is augmented with evidence from further studies in manufacturing, energy and water (Author A *et al*., 2015; Author A, 2009;

[3] Education is captured as a continuous variable, computed from the age an individual left full-time education minus six. The QLFS does provide an alternative coding framework based on the UK education system, this was not however used owing to the difficulties in reconciling international education systems.

2011; 2014: MacKenzie and Forde, 2009; Tannock, 2013) and distribution, hotels and transport (Alberti, 2014; Janta *et al*., 2011; McDowell *et al*., 2008; Wickham *et al*., 2009).

4 Methodology and results

Model specification

This section describes formal regression testing of the associations between a range of demographic and other controls and particular reported responses for taking non-permanent work. The dependent variables are constructed using binary indicators as described below.

- Involuntary = 1 if reported reason is 'you could not find a permanent job'.
- Voluntary = 1 if reported reason is 'you did not want a permanent job'.

Using these two dependent variables and a probit regression estimator we subsequently investigate whether the disparities in the reasons for taking non-permanent work between A8 migrants and UK nationals is robust to multivariate analysis. In order to account for the heterogeneity in both personal and labour market circumstances between our A8 migrants and UK nationals, we include in all regressions as controls the range of socio-demographic and job-related characteristics described in Table 1, as well as a set of year and regional dummies. Finally, a binary variable to identify a person as being an A8 migrant is used to allow the identification of any underlying differences between UK nationals and A8 migrants in why they took non-permanent work. Previous research has highlighted the importance of differences between men and women in the formation of views towards non-permanent jobs. In particular, evidence suggests that females do not want permanent jobs because of family and personal reasons, while men are more likely to accept non-permanent work owing to the lack of availability of permanent work or as a means of gaining future permanent employment (Casey and Alach, 2004). Consequently separate regressions are estimated for male and female sub-samples.

The proportion of males and females who report 'Yes' within each of the categories is reported at the bottom of each column in Table 2.

Estimation Results

Table 2 reports estimated marginal effects from probit regressions for the male and female subsamples. While full sets of estimates are provided for our two categories, this section concentrates upon the key findings from the *involuntary* and *voluntary* models, highlighting the significant differences that exist in the data.

Insert Table 2 here

Voluntary non-permanent work

Section 2 of Table 2 reports marginal effects for the likelihood of having a non-permanent job on a voluntary basis relative to having such a job for any other reason. Briefly, from the female sample those who are married and have dependent children are more likely to cite voluntary reasons, almost certainly reflecting work-life balance decisions. Years of education are positively and significantly associated with a voluntary route into non-permanent work for both gender samples as is months of continuous employment. Those aged between 25-34 are the least likely to state voluntary reasons, while individuals falling into the 55+ age band are the most likely. These latter two results suggest that voluntary non-permanent work is therefore more likely for the highly skilled, and also at the later stages of careers, which is reflective of previous findings (Mitlacher 2007).[4] Importantly, for the

[4] One consideration is the extent to which the sample of non-permanent workers in the QLFS is a non-random sample of the working population. A conventional approach to modelling the non-

female sample, A8 migrants are 12.8 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) less likely to report voluntary reasons, for men the coefficient is again negative but not statistically significant.

Involuntary non-permanent work

A8 migrant workers are strongly associated with involuntary non-permanent work, and it is here that there is some particularly striking evidence. Section 1 of Table 2 reports individual factors associated with involuntary non-permanent work. The involuntary reason produces the most statistically significant covariate estimates of all those proposed for taking non-permanent work. For men, being aged between 25 and 54 increases the likelihood of taking non-permanent work involuntarily relative to the base group (16-24). A8 migrants are 8.9 percentage points ($p < 0.05$) more likely to have involuntarily taken non-permanent work for the male sample, with the corresponding estimate for the female subsample being 14.0 percentage points ($p < 0.05$). Relative to the mean level of citing involuntary reasons for the male sample (43.0 percent), this effect is approximately 21 percent, with the corresponding estimate for females being some 40 percent. Importantly for the male and female sample, those taking roles through agencies are the most likely to cite involuntary reasons compared to all other temporary employment types. χ^2 tests are highly significant, confirming the differences in

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permanent decision is to use Heckman selection models (Heckman, 1979). However, these two step estimators rely on establishing an appropriate identifying instrument which would separately identify the move into non-permanent work from the reason for that move. In this instance it is unlikely a suitable identifying instrument exists as the underlying processes which determine the selection and the outcome of interest are very similar. To deal with this issue of identification the authors have undertaken further investigation using the pooled male/female sample by employing an identification strategy based on regression functional form that follows the approach developed by Sartori (2003). These results are available from the authors on request. In summary the results reveal that A8 migrants are 1.75 percentage points more likely to be in non-permanent employment. Relative to the mean probability of being a non-permanent worker (4.27 percent) this effect is approximately 41 percent. A8 migrants are also found to be 52.2 percentage points more likely to cite involuntary reasons. There is also no statistical difference found between A8 migrants and UK nationals for voluntary reasons.

the estimated coefficients in each case. Moreover, if we exclude from our multivariate analysis the controls for temporary employment type, the statistical significance and marginal effect associated with male A8 migrants in the involuntary models increases substantially to a vast 17.2 percent points, $p < 0.001$, and for females 18.7 percentage points, $p < 0.001$. These results suggest that agencies substantially mediate the relationship between A8 migrants and involuntary non-permanent work, reflective of the higher prevalence of agency workers amongst the A8 migrant sample and the large positive impact of agency work on the probability of reporting involuntary moves into non-permanent work.[5]

5 Discussion

Non-permanent work and migrant workers

Augmentation of these quantitative findings within previous qualitative case studies allows for explanation of the differences in reasons for taking non-permanent work amongst migrants from the A8 nations. Importantly, the quantitative evidence presented above has shown that for migrant workers it is agency jobs which are the form of non-permanent work experienced, as compared to fixed-term and directly-employed for UK workers. While some previous work has established a positive view of agency work for those from the UK (Druker and Stanworth, 2004), amongst studies of migrant workers from the A8 nations the story is less positive. For example, Elena, a migrant worker interviewed for MacKenzie and Forde's (2009: 154) study of glass manufacturing, states that "This is no career. What career can you have in bottles? If an opportunity comes up in other places yes we will take it." This echoes a worker in Author A *et al*.'s (2015:10) study in the food

[5] We also conduct for the male and female involuntary models a moderation strategy based upon the interaction of our A8 migrant and agency dummies. There is no statistically significant difference between UK natives and A8 migrants on the strength of the association between agencies and the probability of citing involuntary reasons.

manufacturing sector, who responded to the question "Can you see this job as being useful in forming a career?" by replying "Such a job here? No, not really. We are sitting and putting those spices in, so what can I learn here? How to measure the weight, that is not so complicated. I am ambitious so that is not the job for me, but I have to earn money, that is why I have to work here". Likewise, in the hospitality sector, a respondent in Alberti's (2014) study named Diana stated that her plan was to return to the secretarial work she had been doing in Lithuania, but that she had taken a job in catering as her English language skills were not at a level to allow her to take a secretarial job in the UK. Similar stories are told by Stanislav in McDowell *et al*.'s (2008) and Magda in Janta *et al*.'s (2011) studies of the hospitality sector. There was certainly no evidence that the non-permanent roles offered by these organisations provided the kind of flexibility to workers and higher wages noted in research by writers such as O Riain (2000) who studied higher skilled non-permanent work. Migrants were taking non-permanent work, specifically agency non-permanent work, owing to their low levels of English language proficiency. Agencies were found to be a route into work for those with lower levels of English language skills.

Amongst migrant workers, qualitative studies have shown that their aspirations were to improve their position within the wider UK labour market, rather than within that particular firm. However, English language skill levels led them into agency work, thus taking non-permanent work involuntarily. Many of the A8 migrants in studies such as those by Author A (2009; 2011; 2012) and Author A *et al*. (2014) indicated that they were unhappy taking a non-permanent role, and this is particularly evident among those who had high levels of education and qualifications. For example, nearly all of the interviewees from Author A's (2011) study who were involved in the lowest skilled and physically most demanding roles had a degree, with several also holding postgraduate level qualifications. However, they were limited by their English language skills and lack of portability of their qualifications and thus, for many, the only option was to take an agency role. For example, one respondent noted "Only problem is with English. I have master of economy my degree, and I work still go up, up, up, up, but I am lazy because I'm too tired to go to college and learn English. My wife is learning in college. Me, I would like but I am too lazy, but I know I must because for me is better."

(Author A, 2011: 496). Even with very low levels of English language skills, it is possible to work in roles that do not have a customer-facing element, particularly in manufacturing, as found by Author A (2009) and Tannock (2013). By comparison, although there are some roles in areas such as hospitality that do not require high levels of English language skills, such as cleaning roles, many of those in customer-facing roles investigated by studies by Alberti (2014), Janta *et al.* (2011), McDowell *et al*. (2008) and Wickham *et al*. (2009) had developed their English language skills to an extent that they were hoping to return to similar jobs that they had held in their home nations.

The role of agencies

Bellemare's (2000) call for an expansion of the scope of what constitutes an actor in the industrial relations system has widened analysis to include, for example, faith groups and civil-society organisations. However, there has been little investigation of the role of employment agencies. This is an important oversight as, although these are not new organisations, their importance in an altered context sees them develop as important actors (Cooke and Wood, 2011; Michelson et al, 2008). Cooke and Wood (2014), for example, point to the particular contextual change of increased levels of migration, and how employment agencies may facilitate this migration. As found by Author A (2009; 2012), agencies provided routes into work that were not available on a directly-employed basis, as this requires the applicant to pass an interview in English. For example, one Lithuanian worker in a spice packing company noted that "I already knew about [SpiceCo] because I tried to get a job not through the agency, I filled in a form but I didn't get the job. But then I go to the agency and I said maybe you have vacancies in [SpiceCo], I would like to get a job in [SpiceCo], and they say OK. . .Directly is better but for me they don't think my English language is very well, and maybe they not trust me. Through an agency it is very easy." (Author A, 2012: 385). It is here that agencies emerge as new actors in the industrial relations system, providing paths and stepping stones that would otherwise not be available.

Although agencies may previously have suggested that they are reactive to demand rather than creating a market (Peck and Theodore, 2002; Ward, 2002) the evidence is that these agencies are very much creating new routes to employment. In part, this draws upon managers' preference for migrants, as they believe they display a superior work ethic (Tannock 2013). There is even evidence from migrants in studies by both McDowell *et al*. (2008) and Janta *et al*. (2011) to indicate that they were approached in their home nations by agencies. Indeed, studies of agencies based in the A8 nations and sourcing to organisations in the UK (Guardian, 2014) would be a fruitful avenue of future research. However, even amongst UK-based agenices, it is clear that it is agencies that are creating labour market migration, rather than being passive. The desire of organisations to recruit workers with what they see as a superior work ethic (Tannock, 2013), combined with a desire by migrants to develop English language skills in the hope of moving into roles that fit their wider skill set, has seen the emergence of agencies as new and very active actors in the industrial relations system of the UK since 2004.

6 Conclusions

This paper has identified the heterogeneity of routes into non-permanent work amongst UK nationals and A8 migrants. The first key finding of this paper is that the crowding of A8 migrants in non-permanent employment is the result of a lack of permanent alternatives and is strongly driven by involuntary reasons. Specifically, 64.5 percent of A8 migrants report taking non-permanent work involuntarily compared to 37.4 percent of UK natives. This is despite previous research has establishing that migrant workers from the A8 nations are better qualified than UK natives (Drinkwater *et al*., 2006). However, despite being well qualified, A8 migrant workers are unable to get roles that utilise their wider skill set as they are hampered by their low levels of English language skills. Qualitative evidence from previous studies augments these findings, showing that many of

these workers have taken low skilled jobs that do not require fluency in English, for example in manufacturing (Author A *et al*., 2015; Author A, 2009; 2011; 2014: MacKenzie and Forde, 2009; Tannock, 2013), or in roles which are not customer-facing in hospitality (Alberti, 2014; Janta *et al*., 2011; McDowell *et al*., 2008; Wickham *et al*., 2009

Non-permanent roles do provide a potential stepping stone if they are used by migrants as an aid in improving their English language skills, either explicitly or implicitly (Chiswick and Miller, 2008). Much previous work into non-permanent jobs has identified their use as a stepping stone, allowing an individual to move from a non-permanent to a permanent version of the same role. However, for A8 migrants, these jobs are not seen as stepping stones in paths identified in previous research (Cohen and Haberfeld, 1993; Holmlund and Storrie, 2002; Korpi and Levin, 2001). On these traditional paths workers would take non-permanent roles in low skilled jobs in order to signal their commitment and hopefully move into those low skilled roles on a permanent basis. Instead, migrant workers hope to use these roles as an opportunity to develop their English language skills, and to then 'step' into a higher skilled role that better utilised their other skill sets. This argument thus provides a key development in debates as to whether non-permanent work can be seen as a stepping stone (Booth *et al*., 2002; Forde and Slater, 2005). These migrant workers would prefer a permanent job, ultimately in higher skilled roles, but restrictive levels of English language skills meant that in the short term they were involuntarily taking non-permanent agency work in lower skilled roles.

Finally, it is clear that in the context of these labour market changes, agencies are emerging as new actors in the industrial relations system (Heery and Frege, 2006). This is further evidenced in qualitative data gathered in both manufacturing case study sites (Author A, 2009; 2011; 2014: MacKenzie and Forde, 2009; Tannock, 2013), and also in previous studies in the distribution, hotels and transport sector (McDowell *et al.*, 2008; Janta *et al.* 2011). Although previously identified as role-players in the triangular employment relationship, agencies have often portrayed themselves as

passive reactors to demand (Peck and Theodore, 2002). The crowding of migrant workers into agency roles as unveiled through the data presented in this quantitative study indicates that they are, instead, very active new agents in the industrial relations system.

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Table 1: Sample Means and Percentage Frequencies of Categories and Control Variables

	Non-Permanent	
Variable	UK Nationals	A8 Migrants
Categories		
Signal	0.059	0.069
Screening	0.042	0.041
Involuntary	0.374	***0.645***
Voluntary	0.190	***0.058***
Other	0.335	***0.187***
Control Variables		
Age 16-24	0.218	0.320
Age 25-34	0.204	0.444
Age 35-44	0.224	0.138
Age 45-54	0.207	0.074
Age 55+	0.147	0.025
Female	0.559	0.493
Disabled	0.154	0.052
Ethnic minority	0.073	0.050
No. dependent Children<16	0.568	0.463
Single	0.449	0.573
Married	0.441	0.325
Widowed/divorced/separated	0.111	0.102
Average years of Education	12.638	13.813
Outright owner	0.227	0.008
Owner with mortgage	0.526	0.044
Private sector renter	0.136	0.846
Local authority renter	0.111	0.099
Seasonal	0.033	0.022
Fixed-term	0.523	0.196
Agency	0.189	0.650
Casual	0.131	0.077
Temporary in some other way	0.125	0.055
Months continuously employed	0.291	0.295
Proxy respondent	33.592	13.212
Agriculture and fishing	0.005	0.028
Manufacturing, energy and water	0.097	0.386
Construction	0.043	0.036
Distribution, hotels, transport	0.166	0.317
Banking, finance, insurance	0.137	0.138
Public administration, education and health	0.553	0.096
N	8954	363
% Non-permanent employment/total employment	4.16%	11.42%

Note: ***Bold italic*** indicates p-value < 0.05. Significance levels are from a χ^2 test of the difference in the response rates between UK nationals and A8 migrants for particular non-permanent employment motives.

Table 2: Multivariate Analysis								
	1) Involuntary				2) Voluntary			
	a) men		b) women		a) men		b) women	
	marg. effect	p-value	marg. effect	p-value	marg. effect	p-value	marg. effect	p-value
Demographic factors:								
Age 25-34	0.040	0.118	0.006	0.784	-0.062	***0.000***	-0.024	0.206
Age 35-44	0.036	0.232	0.003	0.920	0.010	0.631	-0.009	0.682
Age 45-54	0.077	***0.020***	-0.032	0.249	0.013	0.572	0.031	0.194
Age 55+	-0.076	***0.036***	-0.087	***0.010***	0.176	***0.000***	0.156	***0.000***
Disabled	0.044	*0.063*	-0.011	0.564	-0.018	0.207	-0.019	0.222
Ethnic minority	0.094	***0.005***	0.052	*0.062*	-0.033	0.124	-0.002	0.938
A8 Migrant	0.089	***0.047***	0.140	***0.001***	-0.025	0.448	-0.128	***0.000***
Household and family status:								
No. dependent Children<16	-0.008	0.458	-0.022	***0.011***	-0.013	0.125	0.022	***0.001***
Marital Status (Reference: Never married								
Married	-0.029	0.258	-0.045	***0.025***	-0.003	0.844	0.080	***0.000***
Widowed/divorced/separated	0.011	0.749	0.062	***0.019***	-0.027	0.229	-0.014	0.522
Education (Age left full-time education minus 6)								
Years of Education	-0.009	***0.002***	0.002	0.435	0.009	***0.000***	0.007	***0.000***
Housing tenure (Reference: Social renter)								
Outright owner	-0.116	***0.000***	-0.062	***0.022***	0.145	***0.000***	0.144	***0.000***
Owner with mortgage	-0.097	***0.000***	-0.076	***0.002***	0.083	***0.000***	0.076	***0.000***
Private sector renter	-0.082	***0.009***	-0.049	*0.073*	0.043	0.119	0.072	***0.009***
Type of temporary job (Reference: Temporary in some other way)								
Seasonal	0.335	***0.000***	0.237	***0.000***	0.108	***0.008***	0.180	***0.000***
Fixed-term	0.194	***0.000***	0.140	***0.000***	0.028	0.161	-0.039	***0.026***
Agency	0.432	***0.000***	0.296	***0.000***	0.076	***0.001***	0.113	***0.000***
Casual	0.275	***0.000***	0.083	***0.006***	0.232	***0.000***	0.244	***0.000***
Other controls								
Months continuously employed/100	-0.148	***0.000***	-0.134	***0.000***	0.014	*0.058*	0.037	***0.000***
Proxy respondent	0.066	***0.000***	0.006	0.730	-0.019	*0.098*	-0.022	0.108
Sector (Reference: Public administration, education and health)								
Agriculture and fishing	0.045	0.675	0.043	0.654	-0.020	0.770	-0.071	0.320
Manufacturing, energy and water	0.089	***0.001***	0.093	***0.004***	-0.063	***0.000***	-0.043	*0.079*

Construction	0.063	*0.054*	-0.028	0.680	-0.045	***0.028***	-0.077	0.130
Distribution, hotels, transport	0.078	***0.001***	0.052	*0.019*	-0.024	0.111	-0.004	0.828
Banking, finance, insurance	0.007	0.796	0.003	0.896	0.004	0.801	0.010	0.581
Region Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Log Likelihood	-2438.5		-3036.0		-1547.0		-2249.1	
χ^2 (42) (p-value)	***0.000***		***0.000***		***0.000***		***0.000***	
Likelihood ratio test χ^2 (43) males = females (p-value)	***0.000***				***0.000***			
N	4132		5185		4132		5185	
Percentage of dependent variable = 1	42.9		35.0		16.4		20.1	

Source: authors' computations from QLFS 2006-2012

Notes: *Italic* indicates p-value < 0.10, ***bold italic*** indicates p-value < 0.05.